

III. REMARKS

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 1 and 2 were rejected in the Office Action under 35 USC § 103(a) as obvious to Kohnen (6,098,825) in view of Vrame (6,426,278).

Response to Rejections, Amendments to the Claims & Request for Reconsideration

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1 and 2.

Claim 1 specifies, among other things, a unitary construction adapter plate, with a curved back for mounting onto the curved surface of a log, and a generally flat front for securing an electrical component (e.g., an electrical outlet) and cover thereto.

In contrast, Kohnen discloses a multi-part junction box for mounting into a post. The box of Kohnen consists of (i) a box mounted into the post, (ii) an adapter with a flat back for securing onto the front of the box and with a curved front, and (iii) a curved cover, with a curved back for mounting to the curved front of the adapter and a curved front for flush presentation with the outside of the post.

The junction box of Kohnen is not remotely suggestive of the adapter plate of the present invention. The purpose, function and teachings of Kohnen are not connected to or suggestive of the teachings of the present invention. The structure of the Kohnen device cannot be interpreted in any reasonable manner as suggestive of the present invention.

Specifically addressing some of the remarks in the Office Action, Applicant notes that the back side 24 does not have a smooth curvature 53 as suggested in the Office Action. Rather, the back side 24 is flat, and the smooth curvature 53 is on the separate front cover. The front side 41 is similarly not flat as suggested in the Office Action, but is the curved front of an alternate cover. And the zones 33 are not substantially flat as suggested in the Office Action, but are the curved front zones of the adapter to which the cover mates. The Office Action includes these and numerous other inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the interpretation of Kohnen.

Moreover, some of the suggestions in the Office Action are simply not understood by Applicant. The suggestion that Kohnen includes "a front side 41 ... having cover support zone for supporting engagement with the flat back side perimeter of the cover 41" where Kohnen

specifies 41 as an access panel, and there is at most one access panel per junction box, is simply not comprehensible.

The only thing in Kohnen that displays an article configuration remotely similar to the present invention, and only with regard to a curved back and a flat front, are the embodiments of the box shown in FIGS. 9 and 10. However, as previously noted, these are junction boxes, not adapter plates for electrical boxes, and no person skilled in the art would reasonably interpret the teachings of Kohnen with respect to these configuration junction boxes (which, Kohnen indicates could take virtually any configuration, such as at col. 10, lines 1-20, and therefore attaches no significance to the embodiments shown) as rendering obvious the present invention for an adapter plate, particularly in view of the fact that Kohnen further specifies, among other things, that "irrespective" of the box shape and configuration, "it is important that the curved segments 31 and 48 as well as the face plate 38 and 38' be curved so as to mount flush or nearly flush with the curved surface of the encasing structure ..." (col. 10, lines 18-24) where the curved segments and face plate are the front sides of the adapter and cover. In summary, Applicant believes that no person skilled in the art would interpret Kohnen, which teaches providing a junction box with a curved cover for flush mounting into a curved post, as disclosing or suggesting an adapter for mounting onto a curved log for presentation of a flat front.

As regards the rejection of claim 2, and the reasons cited in the Office Action, Applicant notes that many of the arguments presented above, or similar arguments, are applicable, and that Kohnen simply does not teach or remotely suggest those items suggested in the Office Action. Applicant further notes that, among other things, nothing relevant is installed onto the "exposed face" of the post as asserted in the Office Action. Indeed, the point of Kohnen is to install the front cover flush with the exposed face of the post.

The teachings of Vrame do not correct these deficiencies, and as cited in the Office Action, Vrame is simply not relevant to patentability of the present invention. Vrame teaches, with regard to item 40 referenced in the Office Action: "a plaster ring 40, which is made of galvanized or stainless steel, which fastens to the electrical box 20 via fasteners (not shown) in a known manner, around the open front 22 of the electrical box 20, and which has a projecting portion 42 defining a generally rectangular aperture 44 providing access to the electrical switch 30, through the open front 22 of the electrical box 20, after the electrical box 20, the electrical switch 30, and the plaster ring 40 have been installed behind a wall panel 50, such as a drywall

panel" (col. 3, lines 9-17) and that is "installed behind the wall panel 50 (col. 3, lines 22-23). If Vrame is to be utilized in accessing the patentability of the present invention, these are confines within which it must be utilized, and the present invention does not involve installing a plastic ring behind a wall panel, nor is such structure recited in the claims. The present invention relates to an adapter plate for installation onto a curved log.

Although Applicant believed that, in view of the specification and drawings, it would be understood that the opening through the adapter plate extends all the way through, but appreciates that the examiner may have interpreted the phrase "through to the back side" otherwise. As clarification on this point, the claims has been amended to specify that the center opening extending from the front side through the back side, as well as an additional amendment to claim 2 for the same purpose.

New claims 3-6 are dependent claims that recite further structure not shown or suggested in the office action. In particular, the references do not teach an adapter plate having a back provided with a single concave curvature extending generally from top to bottom, or with a pair concave curvatures positioned from top to bottom in relation to one another to bridge the junction between two stacked logs, or a method utilizing such an adapter plate.

The additional references noted in the Office Action do not support rejection of the claims. Prairie, Jr. (5,317,108) teaches a weather-resistant electrical outlet cover, and does not disclose or suggest relevant information concerning an adapter plate such as provided for in the present invention. Finke et al. shows a designation window for use in cover for an electrical component, and again, does not disclose or suggest relevant information concerning an adapter plate such as provided for in the present invention.

In summery, the present invention relates to an adapter plate with a curved back for installation onto a curved log, and front flat zones to carry an electrical box and a cover. The prior art does not suggest such an arrangement. For the above reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the claims pending and under examination in this application are allowable over the references cited in the Office Action, as well as the additional art of record, and requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-2 and allowance of all claims.

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Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Keith Frantz", is written over a horizontal line.

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